

It's September 3, 2019. In today's issue: Archeology Month, Red Summer of 1919, Kearney street fair in 1901, from Bugeaters to Cornhuskers, and more.

September is Nebraska Archeology Month

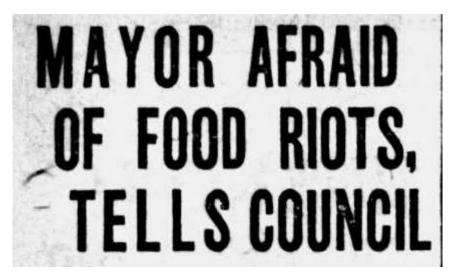


Archeology Month is a time to answer your questions about our buried past. And why not do some digging yourself?

How do archeologists know where to dig? How do you know hold old that is? Which tribe lived here? How much is this stuff worth? Can you keep it? Do you ever find dead people?

State Archeologist Rob Bozell will answer these questions at a <u>free lecture</u> at the Nebraska History Museum on September 19 at noon.

But what you really want is to be an archeologist yourself, wearing a fedora and growling "This belongs in a *museum!*" We're hosting a community dig at Courthouse Rock on the weekend of September 28-29. You can work under the supervision of trained archeologists, and hear lectures at nearby Chimney Rock National Historic Site. Learn more.



Omaha and the "Red Summer" of 1919

World War I was over, but the nation was not at peace.

Omaha was "a city in ferment," crisscrossed with the picket lines of striking boilermakers, bricklayers, teamsters, stockyard and railroad workers, and others.

When a city-wide general strike was threatened, Mayor Ed Smith warned that he was ready to call up the American Legion—private citizens—to "fight if necessary." Packinghouses brought in hundreds of black strikebreakers, and lurid newspaper headlines fueled rage against African Americans and immigrants.

Meanwhile, wartime food shortages continued. Prices soared. By August, Smith was warning of food riots. By September the city was primed to explode. Keep reading.

Next time: The city explodes, September 28, 1919.

Scenes from the 1901 Kearney Street Fair

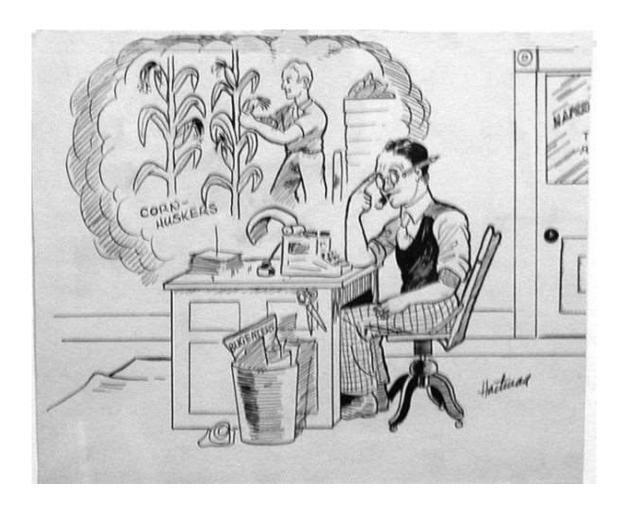


When legendary Nebraska photographer Solomon Butcher photographed a street fair, he captured a variety of scenes on a single glass plate negative. <u>Take a closer look here</u>.

Seriously, somebody ought to host a museum exhibit of this guy's work.

As we enter a new football season, let's keep one thing straight: Nebraska players eat corn, not bugs. How did the Bugeaters become the Cornhuskers?

Find out.



More from History Nebraska social media...

- <u>Buddy at Fort Robinson</u> greets you on National Dog Day.
- In fairness to cat people, here's a cat in a hat.
- 1930s archeology <u>field toilet</u>, with snow.
- The pen that signed the 19th Amendment 100 years ago.
- Remembering governor and US senator <u>Jim Exon</u>.





Upcoming events

Starting September 4, <u>Homeschool Wednesdays</u> is a fun new learning series offered the first Wednesday of each month. And on September 8, <u>Bayard Pioneer Days</u> at Chimney Rock features living history demonstrations, public talks, and other activities. <u>Keep reading</u>.









History Nebraska Newsletter, written by David Bristow, Editor, and Josh Beeman. <u>history.nebraska.gov</u>

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Omaha and the "Red Summer" of 1919

August 30, 2019

World War I was over, but the nation was not at peace.

The year 1919 was a time of unemployment, food shortages, violent strikes, fears of a Communist uprising, and white mobs waging war on black communities in Washington DC, Chicago, and dozens of other cities.



Omaha, too, was "a city in ferment" in the words of historian Michael L. Lawson. That summer the city was crisscrossed with picket lines by striking boilermakers, bricklayers, tailors, telegraphers, teamsters, truck drivers, stockyard and railroad workers, and cooks and waiters.

On June 21 the Central Labor Union threatened to call a general strike of the city's 30,000 union workers in support of the Teamsters. Mayor Ed Smith warned that he was ready to call up the American Legion—private citizens—to "fight if necessary" to put it down. Hundreds of exsoldiers told the mayor they were ready.

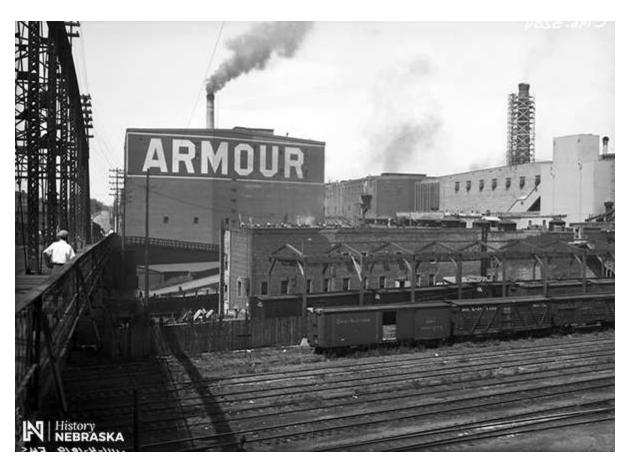
ASKS SUPPO RING STRI Mayor Smith Tells Post That Threat Has Been Made to Carry Red Flag on Farnam Street.

Omaha Bee, June 25, 1919.

The Teamsters strike was settled before it came to that, but Smith grew increasingly unpopular as the summer wore on. He had been elected as a reform candidate, promising to clean up Omaha. The city's longtime mayor, Jim Dahlman, was widely seen as a puppet of crime boss Tom Dennison. Now the Omaha Police Department had a "morals squad" that was widely seen as abusing its authority with brutal vice raids. Smith's enemies circulated petitions for the recall the mayor and city commissioners.

Consumer prices, meanwhile, soared to record highs during the war. Prices rose nearly twice as fast as income, and the public was angered by rumors of hoarding, price gouging, and rent profiteering. Illegal bootleg whiskey was selling for \$5 to \$8 a pint—a hardship for drinkers at a

time when the average hourly wage was 56 cents, but it provided a booming source of revenue for Dennison and his cronies.



Armour packing plant at the Omaha's Union Stockyards, 1919. RG3474-3204

As labor strikes flared across the city, some unions won wage increases, while others lost their jobs to non-union employees. Some of the strikebreakers were black. Omaha's African American population had grown quickly during the "Great Migration" of the World War I years. Across the country, black workers fled appalling conditions in the South for northern factory jobs. White unions usually didn't admit black workers, and Omaha meatpackers brought in hundreds of black non-union workers as strikebreakers. The *Bee* and *Daily News* further stoked racial resentment with lurid headlines about purported black crime.



Meanwhile, wartime food shortages continued and prices soared. By August, Smith was warning of food riots.



Omaha Bee, Aug. 5, 1919.

By September the city was **primed to explode**.

Read Michael L. Lawson's complete article, "Omaha, a City in Ferment: Summer of 1919" (PDF from *Nebraska History*, Fall 1977).

1901 Kearney Street Fair

August 21, 2019

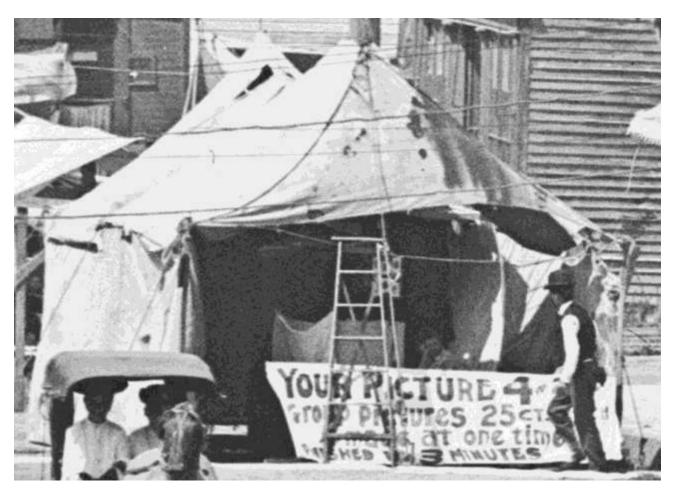


Nebraska photographer Solomon Butcher captured this image of a street fair in Kearney, Nebraska in 1901. Men, women, and children line the street enjoying the carnival's booths, games, a carousel, and a Farris wheel.

History Nebraska holds nearly 4,000 of Solomon Butcher's original glass plate negatives. Most famous for his iconic images of sod houses in Custer County, Butcher also photographed many scenes in Kearney where he and his son Lynn set up a studio in 1902.

As part of a grant from the Library of Congress, History Nebraska created high-resolution scans of the entire Butcher negative collection. Those images are available online on the <u>Prairie</u> <u>Settlement: Nebraska Photographs and Family Letters</u> website. The high-resolution scans allow us to examine details in the photograph not always visible to the naked eye. Here are a few examples taken from this 1901 photograph.





1. Photo Booth. Have your picture taken for \$.04 or group photos for \$.25. Finished in 3 minutes.



2. Children wait in line to ride the carousel.



3. A woman rides a wooden carousel horse.



4. Fine for Spitting on Sidewalk sign.

The <u>Nebraska History Museum</u> currently has an exhibit featuring the work of Solomon Butcher, open until June 1, 2020. Visit the museum and see some of Butcher's most famous photos in <u>Take Our Picture: Sod House Portraits by Solomon Butcher</u>!

Football Players to Eat Corn, Not Bugs

December 11, 2017

Bugeaters and Cornhuskers:

Years ago University of Nebraska football players were called the Bugeaters, after the state-wide nickname which came from Nebraska's numerous bull bats (caprimulgus europaeus), called bugeaters because they fed on bugs. The name was also apt because of the "poverty-stricken appearance of many parts of the state."

In 1900 a sports correspondent began calling the team "the Cornhuskers," and by 1907 the name was accepted. Charles S. 'Cy' Sherman, Lincoln sports editor, was credited with having conceived the name, and in 1933 the University Athletic Board presented him with a gold football, properly inscribed.



History Nebraska General Collection, (NSHS Object ID: 7294-7017)

Categories:

weird nebraska, University of Nebraska, football, Bugeaters, Cornhuskers, Charles S.